

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-15 NSC-10 PM-07 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-03 RSR-01 /065 W

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R 201559 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 281

INFO COMCARIBSEAFRON

CNO

DOD

DIA

USCINCSO

USNAVSO

CINCLANT

CINCLANTFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 5339

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR PFOR MARR VE US

SUBJECT: PUERTO RICAN INQUIRY REGARDING NAVAL EXERCISES

1. TRANSPORT DIVISION CHIEF OF VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS INFORMED EMBASSY THAT SECRETARY OF STATE OF COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO SENT DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO VENEZUELAN CONSUL SAN JUAN, MAKING REFERENCE TO ALLEGATION THAT UNITED STATES AND VENEZUELAN NAVIES DURING JOINT MANEUVERS USE ISLA DE CULEBRA FOR GUNNERY AND BOMBING TARGET.

2. NOTE ALSO ASKS WHETHER VENEZUELAN NAVY AT ANY TIME IN PAST OR PRESENT HAS IN FACT, BEEN OR IS USING ISLA DE CULEBRA FOR THAT PURPOSE.

3. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL CONSIDERS THAT (1) CHANNEL USED FOR THIS INQUIRY WAS NOT PROPER; (2) PUERTO RICO IS ASKING FOR SOMETHING LIKE A "GOOD CONDUCT" CERTIFICATE; AND (3) IF VENEZUELAN NAVY HAS EVER PRACTICED GUNNERY DURING JOINT EXERCISES THIS MUST HAVE BEEN WITH KNOWLEDGE OF PUERTO RICAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH UNITED
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STATES NAVY.

4. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL WISHES MATTER HANDLED WITH DISCRETION AS HE DOES NOT WANT TO DISTURB PRESENT RELATIONS WITH PUERTO RICO, BUT HE DOES DESIRE CLARIFICATION AS TO PURPOSE OF THIS NOTE.

5. US MILITARY GROUP HERE ADVISES THAT VENEZUELAN VESSELS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN SHORE BOMBARDMENT (NO AERIAL BOMBING) TARGET PRACTICE EXERCISES AT ISLA DE CULEBRA DURING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN ANNUAL US FLEET EXERCISES (SPRINGBOARD). UNDER THIS ARRANGEMENT VESSELS ARRIVE AT RANGE AND FIRE AT TARGET INDEPENDENTLY BUT UNDER SCHEDULE PREPARED FOR SPRINGBOARD OPERATION BY COMCARIBSEAFRON.

MILGP STATES ALL INQUIRES AS TO USE OF CULBERA TARGET COMPLEX SHOULD BE REFERRED TO COMCARIBSEAFRON (RADM N. G. WARD) WHO IS SCHEDULING AND COORDINATING AUTHOIRTY FOR CULEBRA RANGE.

6. COMMENT: IN ANY EVENT, THIS MATTER SEEMS NOW A REDUNDANT EXERCISE FOR TWO REASONS: (A) US DECISION TO REMOVE CULEBRA ISLAND AS A FUTURE NAVAL GUNNERY RANGE; AND (B) DECISION OF VENEZUELAN NAVY NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS YEAR' S UNITAS XIV.

7. REQUEST DEPARTMENT' S GUIDANCE FOR ANSWER TO GOV INQUIRY. MCCLINTOCK

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973CARACA05339
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730627/aaaajlnd.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Jan-2002 by smithrj>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980220
Subject: PUERTO RICAN INQUIRY REGARDING NAVAL EXERCISES
TAGS: MARR, PBOR, PFOR, US, VE
To: ARA
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO CINCLANT
DIA
DOD
MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

